

will be sleepwalking into the next deadly wave.

We also need to ensure that as soon as the FDA authorizes a vaccine for kids under the age of 5, parents can get their kids protected as soon as possible.

Funding also is needed for oral antivirals and other therapeutics to treat patients who contract a serious case of COVID. These treatments will keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed.

And we need funding to maintain the testing infrastructure we have built up over the last several months, like President Biden's successful program to put up to 1 billion—billion—rapid tests right at the doors of every American who wants one.

The fact is, Congress should have already provided funding for these life-saving resources, but we still haven't done it. This lack of funding has already hit my home State of Illinois. Last week, shipments of monoclonal antibody treatments to our State were scaled back 35 percent to preserve the supply. Also last week, thanks to a lack of funds, the Department of Health and Human Services announced they would no longer pay hospitals and health clinics for testing they have provided to 30 million uninsured Americans.

Several free community-based testing sites and pharmacies in Illinois are now closing up. The money is running dry. At one community health center in Illinois, one-third of the patients are uninsured. That clinic has received more than \$150,000 to test, treat, and vaccinate the patients—money well spent not just to protect these patients but every Illinoisan. If Congress doesn't provide new funding, that health center may be forced to close for good.

All of us want to keep the masks off for good and move past this coronavirus, but to think we can just wish away COVID forever would be naive, irresponsible, and fiscally unwise.

I urge my Republican colleagues to join in a bipartisan effort to provide new funding for our COVID preparation response efforts. Let's be ready for whatever this virus might bring.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JASMINE HUNT DIMITRIOU

Mr. President, finally, I want to take a special moment to thank a member of my staff who is leaving on a new assignment.

History tells us there have been some extraordinary African-American women in the field of science. Dr. Alice Ball was a chemist who developed the first successful treatment for leprosy. Dr. Patricia Bath was an ophthalmologist who invented something called the laserphaco probe, a tool used in cataract surgery. Dr. Shirley Jackson was a theoretical physicist and former Chair of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

What did they all have in common? They were African-American women

who broke barriers and improved the lives of countless others, and they didn't get the public recognition they deserved.

Well, let me add another name to that list. Her name is Dr. Jasmine Hunt Dimitriou. Dr. Hunt—known as Jasmine in our office—joined my staff in 2010 on an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellowship. She was a newly minted Ph.D. in chemistry who had just graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

The fellowship in my office lasted a year, but thank goodness she liked it so she stayed. We persuaded her to stay longer and devote more than 10 years of her life to public service.

Over the years, Jasmine climbed the office ranks from fellow to lead policy adviser for science, energy, and environment, to legislative director.

Today is her last day in the Senate. She is leaving to take on a new challenge as Deputy Chief of Staff to Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm.

I know I speak for my entire staff when I say that we are thrilled for her. This is a well-deserved recognition and opportunity. I hate to lose her, but I never want to stand in the path of my staff if they have got a chance to promote themselves and to use their talents more effectively. We are going to miss her.

Jasmine grew up in Normal, IL, which is perfect because she is about as normal and stable a person as you will ever find. No matter how long the hours or how tumultuous the mood, she is always clear-headed and calm.

Her mother loved libraries and passed that love along to Jasmine and her brother Joseph. Thankfully, Jasmine remains a voracious reader and learner.

I don't know which is more complicated, understanding how to split an atom or how a bill becomes a law, but Jasmine has mastered both. During her years in the Senate, Jasmine and her husband Mike became parents to two of the cutest little girls. She also has been something of a mother figure to countless young members of my staff whose careers she nurtured.

Now she will bring her leadership for the Nation to the Department of Energy. I have no doubt that, in little time, she will manage to stop climate change with a Thanos snap. She is a remarkable scientist and public servant. I want to thank her for devoting so much of her time and talent to help me, to help the State of Illinois, and to serve this Nation.

Jasmine, best of luck.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

NOMINATION OF JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the nomination of Judith Pryor to serve as First Vice President of the Ex-Im Bank of the United States. Now, the Ex-Im Bank was established to help U.S. exporters by providing financing to foreign buyers of U.S. products.

I have always been very skeptical about the merits of this mission, and I remain skeptical to this day. Ex-Im claims that it only takes risks that private lenders are unable or unwilling to take. That is a central message of the Ex-Im Bank.

We should stop ourselves right there and ask ourselves a question: If private lenders are unwilling or unable to take a particular risk, why should taxpayers be forced to take that risk?

And, at the same time, Ex-Im also claims it only makes safe bets. Mr. President, that is a complete contradiction. It is impossible to do both. Ex-Im can't only take transactions so risky that no one else will do them and, at the same time, only be doing safe transactions. It doesn't make any sense at all.

The fact is, Ex-Im wins business by systematically underpricing risk. That is why borrowers go to Ex-Im instead of any number of private institutions that wouldn't offer deals on the same terms that Ex-Im offers. That is why our largest banks go to Ex-Im for loan guarantees. The Ex-Im terms are too good to be true—at least too good to be true in the private sector. And that is evident by the kinds of transactions that Ex-Im approves.

Consider just last year: Ex-Im financed a deal guaranteeing an \$82 million loan from JPMorgan to Qantas airline for the purpose of buying jets made by General Electric. Now, let's think about this. JPMorgan is the largest bank in America, one of the largest banks in the world. Qantas is the largest airline in Australia. And General Electric is one of the largest industrial companies in the world.

Why did these companies need the American taxpayer to subsidize a deal among the three of them? The obvious answer is they don't. These are some of the biggest, most sophisticated companies in the world, and they have complete access to global capital markets every day of the week. They didn't turn to Ex-Im because they were unable to secure private financing. They turned to Ex-Im because they got a better deal than they would get in a strictly private transaction.

Now, as if that isn't galling enough, Ex-Im has now decided that American markets can't meet our domestic financing needs—purely domestic. I remind you, the U.S. capital markets are the largest, deepest, most sophisticated capital markets in the world by far. Anyone with a bright idea and a business plan can raise capital in the United States. They do it every day.

According to the Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Small Business Capital Formation report for fiscal year 2021—last year—there were \$2.2 trillion in private offerings of debt and equity and \$1.7 trillion in initial public offerings and other registered securities. So that is almost \$4 trillion of capital markets activities in the United States. That is how big our capital markets are.